

A RESOLUTION to honor the Tennessee State Association of the Improved, Benevolent, Protective, Order, Elks of the World upon their 50th Anniversary and designate the week of April 21-26, 1995, as "Elks Week in Nashville".

WHEREAS, the Improved, Benevolent, Protective, Order, Elks of the World (I.B.P.O.E. of W.) is a fraternal order that was founded in 1898 and has the largest membership of any black fraternal order in the world with members in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Africa. The first state convention of the order was held in Nashville in 1945; and

WHEREAS, the I.B.P.O.E. of W. has a strong Biblical background which is based on the principles of charity, justice and love and belief in a Supreme Being. The I.B.P.O.E. of W. is dedicated to making the world a better place in which to live because equal opportunity is guaranteed to all irrespective of race, creed, or color; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee State Association of I.B.P.O.E. of W. is composed of lodges and temples across the state of Tennessee and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and will convene in Nashville April 21-26 to acknowledge this worthy occasion; and

WHEREAS, this laudable organization is headed in Tennessee by the honorable Richard Dennis, Sr., and nationwide by Donald P. Wilson, Grand Exalted Ruler; and

WHEREAS, the Elks lodges are pillars of growth and strength for youth and seniors in our different communities and surrounding areas and a nucleus of support for both; and

WHEREAS, the order is best known for its Department of Education, which has given more than \$2.5 million in scholarships to deserving youth of all races within the past 50 years;

the fraternal and philanthropic group is also known for its oratorical contest, held each year on local, state, regional, and national levels; and

WHEREAS, many of our present-day and former leaders got their start with the extended “helping hand” of the Elks, including Dr. Dorothy Height, John O. Killens, Oprah Winfrey, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Pat Russell, A. Phillip Randolph, Adam Clayton Powell, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others; and

WHEREAS, since 1926, its Civil Liberties Department has fought all forms of injustice against racial groups and their Grand Lodge, Grand Temple and local lodges and temples have made financial contributions to civil rights movements and organizations coast to coast; and

WHEREAS, other laudable departments within the I.B.P.O.E. of W. include Health, Shrine, Antlered Guard, burial fund, conventions and others, and the Elks National Shrine in North Carolina provides facilities for an annual Computer Leadership Camp for youths; and

WHEREAS, the I.B.P.O.E. of W. also includes a prominent auxiliary, the “Daughters”, of which our own Lillian K. Lewis is the state president and the honorable Jean C.W. Smith is the Grand Daughter Ruler; and

WHEREAS, it is highly appropriate that as elected representatives we should honor and commend the fine men and women of this fraternal order and auxiliary, as the Tennessee Association celebrates its 50th anniversary; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby proclaim the week of April 21-26, 1995, “Elks Week in Nashville”, in celebration of 50 years of excellent philanthropic efforts by the Tennessee State Association of the I.B.P.O.E. of W.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.